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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 002532

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [TU](#) [AR](#) [AF](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: TURKEY: USD(P) EDELMAN AND A/S FRIED DISCUSS
ARMENIAN GENOCIDE RESOLUTION WITH MFA US APAKAN

Classified By: Ambassador Ross Wilson for reasons 1.4 (b,d).

[11](#). (C) SUMMARY: USD(P) Edelman and EUR A/S Fried told MFA U/S Apakan and senior MFA officials October 13 that the Administration regrets House Foreign Affairs Committee passage of HR 106 and will continue to strongly oppose its passage by the House. They urged Turkish officials to avoid reactions that would irrevocably damage the US-Turkish partnership. Apakan described Turkish humiliation over the resolution and expressed concern over its impact on Turkish-US, Turkish-Israeli and Turkish-West relations. House passage would make it impossible for Turkey to work with Armenia for a long time. Apakan highlighted Turkey's proposal to establish a commission of historians that could include third countries, such as the US. He reiterated Turkey's readiness to move toward normalization of ties with Yerevan but declared that Turkey will not be blackmailed into doing so. Discussion of Iraq/the PKK is reported septel.
END SUMMARY.

[12](#). (C) Edelman and Fried expressed gratitude for the Turks' willingness to meet at short notice on a holiday weekend. They explained that Secretaries Rice and Gates had asked them to come to Ankara to express regret for the HFAC passage of HR 106 and assure the Turkish government of the Administration's intention to do everything possible to prevent approval by the House. They described in detail the efforts of Administration officials before the HFAC vote from the President on down. Even senior military officers got involved -- not the usual practice but indicative of the importance we attach to this matter.

[13](#). (C) Edelman and Fried acknowledged that the Turkish public and government would have to react to HR 106 passage in the House. They asked that Turkey bear in mind the longstanding importance of our strategic partnership and its relevance today in the face of numerous common challenges in the region. It will be crucial, if HR 106 passes, to carefully manage the impact on our relationship so as not to jeopardize our ability to work together. Secretaries Rice and Gates remain deeply committed to the bilateral relationship.

[14](#). (C) Apakan, accompanied by a large group of senior MFA officials -- including D/US for Security Akgunay, Americas D/US Berk, Caucasus D/US Cevikoz, spokesman Levent Bilman, and FM Babacan aide Murat Esenli -- expressed his appreciation for the visit of the US delegation and the

efforts of the US Administration to oppose HR 106. He stated that "we share your sentiments and will continue to care for, and be careful of, our bilateral relations." He said that Turkey is "hurt and humiliated" by the resolution. A major Turkish fear is that passage of HR 106 would encourage others to adopt similar resolutions and laws. Turkey understands that there is an effort underway to revive legislation passed last year in the French National Assembly to criminalize denial of an Armenian genocide. The Russian Duma may be about to consider a similar bill. The resolution threatens to re-open World War I-era claims settled by the Lausanne Treaty, including by Pontian Greeks, Bulgarians, and Assyrians.

15. (C) Describing Turkey-US-Israel relations as a key "triangle" essential for regional security, Apakan stated that passage of HR 106 would affect Turkey-Israel relations. Israel had sought to be helpful in opposing the resolution, but those efforts had been insufficient. Despite its geographical location, Apakan said, Turkey is clearly oriented to the West and this constitutes a major factor for regional stability, allowing Turkey to play a positive role in the Middle East peace process, moderate Syrian behavior, and pressure Iran to act responsibly. Turkey's whole foreign policy depends upon a strategic relationship with the US and progress toward EU membership. The AGR and PKK are alien issues that do great damage to these agendas.

16. (C) Apakan warned that passage of an Armenian Genocide Resolution would "close the door" to Turkey's attempts to maintain a dialogue with Armenia. He referred to three rounds of recent senior-level talks with Armenia. Turkey proposed a fourth round of meetings a couple of months ago, but Armenia has not responded. Turkey had signaled its

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readiness to move toward a normalization of ties. Instead, Yerevan has drawn closer to the Armenian diaspora. In this climate, the result of HR 106's passage will be that Armenia becomes a permanent burr and divider in US-Turkish relations; the resolution won't be a one-time crisis, but one that goes on and on.

17. (C) Finally, Apakan noted Prime Minister Erdogan's recent public statements on the Armenian genocide issue and stated that their increasingly critical nature reflects growing negative public sentiment. He noted the Turkish-American Business Council's decision to postpone a working meeting planned for the week of October 15 in the U.S. The MFA had not arranged this cancellation; it, too, reflects public sentiment. He appealed for strong and successful Administration efforts, including a "creative political solution," to stop HR 106.

18. (C) Apakan confirmed that the Turkish offer of a joint historical commission remains on the table. Turkey welcomes third-country participation in such a commission, including by American and even pro-Armenian historians. A country Apakan declined to identify had recently proposed a trilateral historians commission and process of accommodation. Armenia had expressed interest, but did nothing. Apakan warned however, that if the US Congress establishes an Armenian genocide as a "political fact," then there would be no logic to pursuing the commission idea or other efforts at normalization of ties with Armenia.

19. (C) Apakan also suggested possible referral of the issue to the International Court of Justice or to arbitration in The Hague. A/S Fried asked if Turkey would be willing to refer, together with Armenia, its dispute over genocide to an international tribunal if Armenia agrees to request a delay of HR 106. Apakan and his colleagues opined that Armenia is not interested in such a compromise. Apakan added that the GOA is rejoicing over the HFAC vote and is now using the prospect of House passage of HR 106 to "blackmail" Turkey into unilaterally normalizing relations and opening the

Turkish-Armenian border. Turkey cannot accept this.

¶10. (C) Apakan concluded by warning that House passage of HR 106 would have long-range implications and would not be a "one-time affair." He urged US officials to prevent its passage. Edelman and Fried undertook to brief Secretaries Rice and Gates on Turkish views and continue to look for solutions. The Administration will continue to strongly oppose House passage of HR 106. Both implored Turkish officials to bear in mind the importance of the bilateral relationship, historically and with regard to the formidable challenges we must face together now, and urged them not to take measures that would irreversibly damage relations.

¶11. (U) USD(P) Edelman and A/S Fried did not have an opportunity to review this cable.

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